

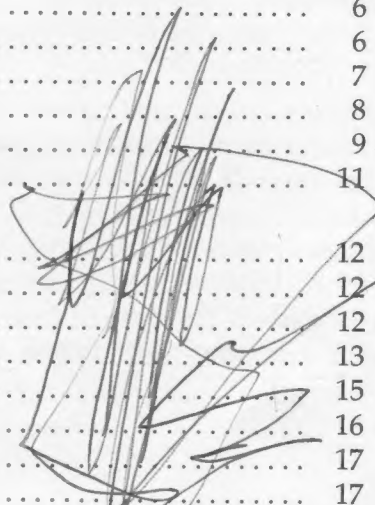


# ***INTERMEDIATE MANUAL***



# Intermediate Manual

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# I. Delivery

## A. Refining the Release Motion

When you took a novice clinic the instructor provided you with sufficient knowledge to correctly deliver the stone which involves:

- 1) Developing the correct and proper stance.
- 2) Learning the timing of body movements to correctly slide in behind the stone.
- 3) Knowing how to apply the in-turn and out-turn when the stone is released.

Detailed discussion and instruction concerning turns and releases was not provided since you must learn to correctly slide with the stone before the teaching focus swings to release. However, once the delivery fundamentals have developed, you then must become concerned with grooving a consistent, positive release. The release to be effective need not be perfect, but must be consistent. If release errors are predictable, skips can adjust the broom accordingly to compensate for error. However, someone who "spray shoots", releasing each stone slightly different, makes it a near impossible task for the skip to do much more than guess where the target should be placed.

Utilizing leg drive makes it easy to regulate speed from the hack. This means virtually, it should be easy to release a draw and takeout very close to the same point on the ice which contributes to a consistent release. Maintaining the proper grip on the stone throughout the entire delivery also assists the player in accomplishing the ideal release motion. The final motion of release takes place during the last three or four feet of delivery. The entire movement is neither hurried nor slow. The application of the turn to the handle takes place while you slowly count "1, 2". THE KEY: The handle must never be allowed to slide off the finger tips. The final motion, referred to as POSITIVE RELEASE, makes certain the stone is travelling straight toward the broom.

## Faults of Release

- 1) Starting to apply the turn too soon — in many cases, before the stone touches down from the backswing.
- 2) Varying the point of release too drastically from shot to shot — releasing one shot at the back of the 12-foot, while the next stone might be released at the hog line.
- 3) Applying the turn to the stone very slowly, then keeping the hand stationary and finally opening the hand at release (handshake position). Result: Dead handle.
- 4) Failure to release the rock once the handshake position is reached.
- 5) Applying the turn and final motion of release too quickly, jabbing the rock inside or outside.

## B. Weight Control

Weight control is a difficult subject to teach and, for the most part, is a "feel" that must be developed through hundreds of meaningful executions. There are, however, a number of helpful hints that make the "feel" easier to develop. The lead has the most difficult time determining exact weight at the start of each game since he or she has had very little opportunity for reference.

The points that can be of assistance are:

- 1) If possible, the lead should wait for someone else to throw. By observing the movement of one stone on the next sheet, much can be learned about draw weight.

- 2) If the opposing team throws first, the lead should position himself at the first hog line to determine the weight thrown and where the stone stops. Vice-skip and second should also position themselves at the hog line to enable correct sweeping judgment on the lead's first stone. The second and third have an opportunity to watch at least four rocks travel from end to end before they throw, and if correctly positioned, should get a fairly good indication of the weight required. Skips have a more difficult task learning the weight and must acquire the "feel" by watching stones travel towards them which means a depth perception for rock momentum must be developed.

Another trick practised by many skips, particularly at the competitive level, is timing first-end draws with a stop watch. The timing begins when the stone crosses the first hog line and continues until the rock stops. To be effective, the skip must have a fairly good mental picture of a base weight, say 14 seconds, then add or delete from base as required. Of course, there is quite a variety of systems used for developing weight judgment.

Every player on the team must know the ice as well as the skip for correct throwing and sweeping judgment. Knowledge of how many stones have travelled over a portion of ice and the amount of ice curl has considerable bearing on the distance a rock will travel. Freshly applied pebble has many small friction points that offer resistance to a stone's progress. When a number of rocks have travelled over a particular portion of the ice, the friction points are smoothed with the result being faster ice.

It therefore becomes very important for each player to be aware of how many rocks have passed over a portion of the ice when judging the weight required for a particular shot. One of the more common examples of pebble wear from stone travel appears with the come-around shot. With this type of shot, three or more stones may travel the same path during the course of an end. As each shot travels the path, it becomes smoother because of pebble wear and frost reduction which means the thrower must deliver each shot progressively lighter.

Rocks that curl very little will travel much further than rocks that curl a great amount, or tend to bite in. The stone curling a large amount virtually is going in two directions at the same time and therefore will stop sooner.

Much is learned about weight control by observing every minor happening during the course of a game. Attentive players make more shots.

### *C. Learn to Analyze Your Own Delivery*

When someone is trained as a curling instructor or coach he or she must initially learn how to correct delivery faults with concern for the two following points; a) it is essential to correct faults in order of most important to least important, and b) work on one problem at a time, unless the imperfections are closely related. Every curler should also be aware of the same fundamentals so they might identify and correct their own problems when necessary.

The following should provide some guidance for self-analysis and correction.

1. The sliding foot must be in the centre of gravity during the entire sliding motion. This is a basic fundamental. The error usually stems from incorrect timing in the backswing or improper positioning and movement of the sliding foot during the backswing. The sliding foot is often taken too far back or too far to the side during the backswing. This problem is often, but not always identified by a drift in the slide. Sometimes the sliding foot is so close to being under the centre of gravity that only a slight deviation exists. This problem is often aided by the broom trailing slightly behind the sliding foot or by a trailing foot position that has the toe and the corresponding hip turned to the outside. Sliding foot timing and positioning problems are best corrected by going back to the training stage of throwing without a stone. Have someone hold a broom for you at the hog line to use as a target and remember to aim the sliding foot at the target.

*Correctly  
Positioning the Delivery*

2. Many curlers develop a style with the sliding foot on the line of delivery but in front of the centre of gravity. The sliding foot must be in a position even with the sternum throughout the slide. This can be quickly checked by having someone view a profile of your delivery.
3. Some curlers, often juniors who have a greater degree of flexibility, slide forward from the hack smooth and low but have their sliding foot inside the centre of gravity. This is caused by dropping the body too quickly in the forward slide, forcing the sliding foot inside the line of delivery. Remember, your upper body must sink gradually and be at its lowest at the conclusion of the slide.
4. Many curlers experience difficulty because their backswing is off the line of delivery. Others have problems laying the stone on the ice surface smoothly and consistently. Usually, this is caused by one of the following:
  - a) Bent arm in the backswing
  - b) Incorrect line-up in hack
  - \* c) Raising the upper body during the backswing.

Remember, if everything in the delivery seems to be correct but there still appears to be a problem, for all intent and purpose there is probably something wrong with your release. However, if you are experiencing difficulty check the delivery beginning with the positioning of the sliding foot before considering the release.

## II. Sweeping

### A. When and How to Judge

The mechanics of sweeping are one thing; learning WHEN to sweep is yet another

Sweepers, and in particular, the inside sweeper, are in a better position to judge the weight of a running stone than are the skip or third calling play from the house. To be a good weight judge, the sweeper must:

- 1) Be able to grasp the ice conditions quickly, and be alert to changes in conditions.
- 2) Know beyond a doubt the exact nature of each shot called and what type of weight is required for successful execution.

When the stone has been released and the sweepers think they know the weight, they will:

- 1) Commence sweeping because there isn't sufficient weight; or
- 2) Follow and keep close watch; or
- 3) Keep a light sweeping motion in the path of the stone because the weight is close to that required — (sweeping lightly removes all foreign matter in the path of the stone); or
- 4) Signal the skip or third that there is more than enough weight to successfully complete the shot.

The inside sweeper must continually fluctuate the line of sight from stone to house to determine how much distance remains in relation to the stone's forward momentum.

Just as the skip must know exact ice reaction when he or she puts down the broom as a target, so must the sweeper know ice reaction for sweeping judgment. When the ice is running straight, rocks will, of course, travel to the distant end much quicker than when the ice is curling. If the ice is swingy, the running edge will bite in quicker as the stone travels down the sheet, slowing it down considerably.

Sweepers must also be constantly aware of pebble wear changes from one side of a sheet to the other. When a stone is travelling down centre ice, but heading for the outside, both sweepers must know the exact point of break into light pebble wear. Within an instant of the stone beginning to move, both sweepers must commence sweeping. If the sweepers don't make a move before the rock begins to die, the shot, in all probability, will be lost.

This is particularly true of draw shots.

### B. Calling Sweeping

Sweeping is under the direction and control of the skip or vice-skip controlling play. However, the inside sweeper has first call for weight judgment while the person within the circles provides direction guide.

When a free draw is being played, because weight judgment is the only concern, the inside sweeper should have primary control. Many skips do, however, add comments while the stone travels along the sheet which should never be ignored.

When an open takeout is being played, sweeping should be under direct and complete control of the person within the circles because direction is the only consideration. However, the sweepers must provide the skip with an indication of weight if he or she feels the stone has been under-thrown or over-thrown.

Shots requiring judgment for weight and line are probably the most difficult, but generally remain in control of the person in the circles and might go as follows:

- 1) Come-around is being played and as the stone is released, the skip hollers "sweep!". The inside sweeper replies "weight is good". If the skip continues to call "sweep" the



sweepers identify the call being for line. Should the skip not initially reply, both sweepers stop sweeping.

- 2) A come-around is released and both sweepers commence sweeping. The skip knows the rock has to curl a considerable amount and for that reason hollers "whoa!". The inside sweeper originally commenced sweeping because he or she knew the rock was light, so a reply of "it's light" follows. A decision must be made then by the skip.

- a) Continue to sweep and possibly get it into the circles without cover; or

- b) Don't sweep and allow it to curl and probably stop short.

The vast majority of skips and vice-skips (except the very experienced) tend to call sweeping too late. People at the non-competitive level should develop the habit of calling sweep at the first indication of need, not wait.

### C. Skip Advising Sweepers

Many skips make an error by not advising the sweepers of the desired result from each shot being attempted. When a takeout or hitting shot of any nature is being played, informing is not that important since sweeping judgment is nearly completely under the control of the person within the rings.

However, a delicate draw or guard requires each sweeper to know exactly what is expected as the final result. With this knowledge, the sweeper should be able to correctly position the stone as desired.

### D. Sweeping Responsibilities

When talking about correct and proper approach to sweeping during the course of a game, basically there are three areas of consideration or responsibility; thrower, sweepers and skip.

- 1) *Thrower* — When it comes to determining whether or not a stone requires sweeping, the thrower should express very little opinion. Why? It is very difficult on occasion for the thrower to see the exact path of the stone because they may be partially obstructed by sweepers, or at a bad angle to see. The person on the T-line is in the best position to judge what is happening regarding the line of a stone.

However, curlers with experience usually know at the time of release if they have made an error, that is, turned the stone in, flipped it out, or thrown the wrong weight. With this in mind, the thrower might offer advice to the sweepers at release.

- 2) *Sweepers* — The number one area of consideration for sweeping responsibility has previously been discussed, which is who shall be the inside sweeper. Once that has been determined, the outside sweeper follows the inside sweeper's direction, but advises and cautions. On open draws, the inside sweeper has complete sweeping responsibility while takeout sweeping direction comes from the tee head. A common problem in any sweeping combination is incompatibility. If the two can't work as a unit, disaster is sure to strike.
- 3) *Skip or Vice-Skip* — The person within the rings is assumed to be in charge of play for each and every shot during a game. With this in mind, it becomes obvious that the final say of sweeping direction lies with that person unless the shot being played only involves judgment for weight. As previously discussed, only shots requiring judgment for weight alone lie with the inside sweeper, while everything else is communication between inside sweeper and the tee head, with the tee head's decision being final. There are many situations where the sweepers are making accurate weight judgment while the person within the circles is correctly calling line. As previously mentioned, the person in the rings has the final say.

### III. Basic Skipping and Team Responsibility

#### A. The Positions

Every player must be able to execute all the shots. Curling depends upon the united efforts of all four players on the team, the contribution of each being equally important for success. There is no doubt it requires more experience to skip than play lead, but should the lead fall down in his or her play, it will subject the entire team to a handicap even the ablest skip will be hard-pressed to overcome.

Every player on a competitive team has a definite responsibility which makes each position important. Many start curling at lead and ultimately progress to skip. Most never realize that mental, physical and special abilities should determine an individual's position. There is honor in excelling at any position.

*Skip:* Leadership ability is the most important prerequisite to becoming an effective skip. The skip must be able to guide and control his or her team in a manner that will command respect from every other member of the rink.

It takes a certain breed to be a good skip, but he or she need not always be the best shotmaker on the team. The skip must control the team, call the proper shot, use proper strategy, and successfully complete every shot that will determine the final outcome of the game.

Good skips must be able to gauge how much a particular rock will curl dependent upon the weight thrown, ice conditions and the manner in which the thrower releases the stone. Consistently placing the broom in the correct spot for every shot attempted is a key responsibility. To consistently call ice correctly requires an exact knowledge of individual differences, particularly release. The knowledge of release is gathered through the skip's ability to analyze each player's proficiency at executing various shots. With this in mind, the wise skip will ask each player to throw his best turn, shot, etc., when and where possible. This is a key factor in developing a player's confidence.

Through close observation, the skip must also analyze the opponent's deliveries and their particular styles of play. It is then possible to exploit possible weaknesses.

The skip, as the person in charge of the tee, also has control of calling sweeping. Expertise in this area is gained from close observation of ice conditions and how the running stones react for every shot attempted.

*Third, Vice-Skip or Mate:* Third is probably THE key position on any successful team. The vice-skip must possess the knowledge and shooting ability of the skip, and at the same time have developed an effective sweeping skill. Vice-skips must be able to execute delicate shots with precision, easing the burden for the skip who functions under greater pressure.

The capable third must be an aid to the skip when he or she has difficulty recalling or solving ice conditions, also when strategy discussion is necessary. It is often beneficial to the team if the third has had some skipping experience. Such background equips the entire team to appreciate and better understand the problems of skipping. The third also must use a proper approach when "suggesting" ideas to the skip. The approach begins by having respect for the skip.

*Front End:* Why consider playing lead or second on a competitive team? A good front end is noted for certain characteristics which are as important as those denoting the skip and third. The number one consideration should be an individual's ability to sweep and judge the weight of a running stone. If any of the four people forming a team have exceptional sweeping ability, their talent should be utilized at lead or second. Effective sweeping requires a great deal of strength and endurance which means the lead and second must be in good physical condition.

An individual who tends to be excitable should also play as a front-ender where tension and excess energy can be worked off sweeping. THE LEAD AND SECOND BOTH must be satisfied at their positions. Certain players make better front enders than others.

*Second:* Seconds, usually very accurate hitters, are able to pick up the slack, if any, left by the lead. Good seconds are noted for having the ability to execute doubles, hits and rolls, etc. then bounce back with perfect draw weight. Seconds must be able to throw fairly hard with accuracy since they are primarily concerned with making certain the opposing rocks are removed from play. Effective seconds should be capable of hitting a portion of a stone at least 18 times out of 20. Generally, a top second doesn't have quite as delicate a feel for fine shots as the third.

*Lead:* The first position is sometimes thought to be easy and unimportant. This view is ridiculous. The lead has the most difficult job determining draw weight since he throws the first stones each end. A good lead, while being able to draw consistently at all times, must also hit as accurately as the second. The lead will often set the complexion of an end, or an entire game by successfully completing a very delicate shot. In contrast, the lead can also change the outcome of an end by missing a shot.

## B. Communication

Lack of communication is a reason for many of the world's ills and it will provide the same degree of adversity in curling. Communication gaps may occur in many different areas between players, skip-sweeper rapport, failure of the skip to provide each player with information to successfully complete each shot, lack of tactfulness by the skip and vice-skip.

THE KEY: All players must be completely familiar with what is taking place at all times.

- 1) *Player-to-Player Communication:* Each player on a successful team must be prepared to advise and assist his mates at any time during a game. The lead and second must always be prepared to assist the skip and vice-skip with weight control. The front-end has the best grasp of weight control after observing the progression of nearly every stone up and down the sheet. Similarly the third is in the best position to offer advice to the front end regarding ice reaction. The vice-skip is in constant communication with the skip, and between them they should always be aware of ice curl and the details of the shot being attempted. While sweeping, both sweepers must be in constant communication to effectively judge and sweep each stone. The inside sweeper must keep the skip informed of the stone's progress with reference to speed while the skip advises the inside sweeper of the rock's movement regarding line.
- 2) *Shot Communication:* Many shots are missed in curling because the skip does not properly explain to the player the shot he or she is attempting. When a lack of communication occurs during a takeout attempt, the player may not understand.
  - a) exactly how much WEIGHT is to be thrown;
  - b) which side of the stone it is preferable to hit;
  - c) would it be best to be wide, narrow, light or heavy (for instance, when playing a come-around takeout shot, it is always preferable to remove the guard rather than miss on the wide side).

Shots having more than one possible outcome must be explained with the priority of result emphasized.

- 3) *Skip-Vice-Skip Communication:* It is most important for these two players to enjoy a rapport allowing for easy communication. It begins with the manner of approach employed by the vice-skip when communicating with the skip. The third must constantly build confidence while avoiding criticism of the skip's judgment.

At the same time, the skip must keep the third completely aware of the strategy being employed. The skip should also consult the third with matters involving strategy approach when there is doubt. If the skip wants the opinion of the front-end players, it is acceptable to consult them on occasion.

### C. Reading Ice and Ice Conditions

1) *Reading Ice* — This is every player's responsibility. It requires experience and, most important, concentration. Experienced players make a deliberate effort to familiarize themselves with the curl of both turns early and then commit the knowledge to memory. The ice, on occasion, changes many times during the course of a game, complicating this difficult task further.

From the outset of a game, the skip must gather information from every shot which enables him to put together the "mental ice book". However, as the game progresses, the skip should only read ice from shots thrown by his own players. Opposing players often have unique, unorthodox releases, making their stones react strangely. The skip should know the releases of his players and how each rock will react under different circumstances and conditions.

Most skips make the task of reading ice easier by using the T-line as the reference point, particularly when playing draws. The skip must memorize where each rock stops in relation to the line of release. This observation is important when icing players for relatively the same shot. T-line reference and path memorization is vital when playing every shot with the possible exception of open takeouts.

All players must have an adequate grasp of ice curl. However, not all have the same opportunity to observe because of limited viewing and poor perspective. Hence, the thrower should rely upon the skip for correct broom.

The importance of reading ice effectively cannot be over-emphasized. It is often the difference between winning and losing. The key is CONCENTRATION.

2) *Ice Conditions* — When the stones are reacting normally, the ice conditions being consistent, the game is played in what might be referred to as the regular manner. However, if the ice is heavy, swingy, fast or straight, the style of play must be adjusted for the particular condition.

a) *Heavy ice* — This condition makes it difficult to execute any type of shot requiring a delicate touch. Depending upon the conditions takeouts may even be difficult to execute. Under this condition, the best strategy is simply draw to the rings and let the opponent worry about removing the stone. As such, absolute takeout is not advisable even when you are ahead in points. If takeouts are played, very firm weight must be used and if your team throws accurately, it is a distinct advantage.

b) *Swingy ice* — Swingy and heavy ice often go hand in hand. Consequently, the adjustment for swingy ice is often much the same as on heavy ice. So, absolute takeout is not suggested due to the high probability of missing. Accuracy with weight of course, is a requirement for playing takeout shots. The best strategy, again, is throw rocks into the rings and let the opponent worry about removing them. Delicate shots such as guards or freezes, or any type of play requiring the positioning of a stone in a direct line are to be avoided because they are of questionable value even when executed correctly.

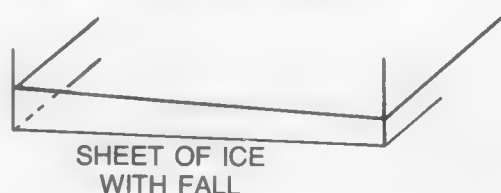
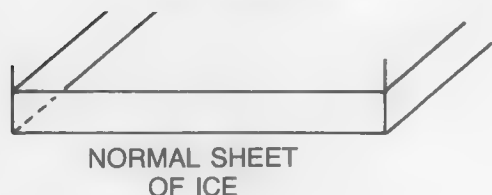
c) *Straight ice* — On straight ice, come-around shots are difficult, but if made are exceptionally valuable. Straight ice lends itself well to playing freezes, raises and open hits. It is common for one turn on a sheet of ice to run straight while the other curls. The straight turn should always be used for hitting unless an unavoidable situation forces the use of the opposite turn.



d) *Fast ice* — Most players initially have problems adjusting when asked to play delicate shots involving weight adjustment on quick ice. Neither skip nor player are accustomed to keen ice and it takes both time to adjust. Also, most sweepers have difficulty judging the weight of a running stone correctly. Therefore, shots requiring delicate weight control should be avoided until at least the fourth or fifth end, by which time everyone has had the opportunity to adjust. On quick ice, sweeping has a great influence on a shot, so good sweeping teams usually throw light and let the sweepers position the shot as required.

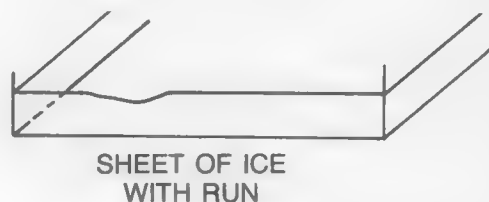
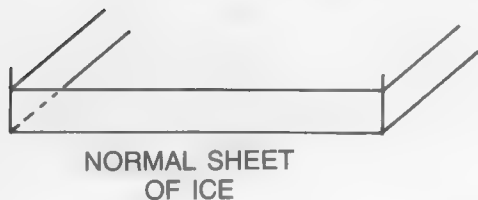
e) *Falls and runs* — Many curlers commonly use the terms “fall” and “run” without knowledge of the distinction between the two.

- i) *Fall* — When a stone “falls” on a sheet of ice, the sheet is slanted. As the term implies, the rock will “fall” against the turn. Falls are most prevalent in curling rinks with sand bases. The base becomes slanted, due to frost heaving.



With this in mind, a slow-moving stone will “fall” against the turn more than a faster-moving rock because it is in motion longer and has more time to “fall”. A “falling” rock actually moves in the opposite direction to the turn applied.

- ii) *Run* — A run is a groove in the ice, possibly caused by one of two factors; a sunken artificial ice pipe in a rink with a sand base or improper use of an ice scraper with the result being a dip in the sheet.



When a slow moving rock hits a run, it generally stays in the groove until it is about to stop. If the stone has a sharp running edge, it often is able to dig itself out of the run just prior to stopping. On occasion, a draw appears to curl as it is coming to rest. However, a fast-moving stone doesn't have the same opportunity to work its way out of the rut, and usually follows the rut from end to end.

Every player must learn to adjust to ice changes quickly. THE KEY: Believe what you see!

## D. Analyzing Your Team and Opponent

1) Analyzing your team — many skips adequately size up the opponent, but fail to analyze and adjust their own teams accordingly. The following points are to be considered prior to asking each player to throw.

- If there is a choice, which turn does the player execute best?
- Does the player throw the required turn consistently wide or narrow? If so, make the necessary adjustment when giving ice for the shot being attempted. (If sufficient practice time is available, the fault should be corrected.)

- c) Is there a possible choice in the weight required for the shot being played? Always allow the player to throw his best weight unless the situation demands something a little different.
- d) Do you have a good hitting team? A skip without consistent hitters is at a disadvantage and, for the most part, must resort to a non-conventional approach to be in contention at game end.
- e) Does the player throwing have the touch required to successfully execute delicate draws, tap backs, come-arounds, etc.? If the thrower does not possess the touch required, resort to a simpler style unless the situation demands the shot.
- f) Do you have a strong sweeping front end? If so, utilize the sweeping power for skip and vice-skip shots. BUT, without strong sweeping, MAKE SURE OF WEIGHT.
- g) What type of release does the thrower have? The player who releases the stone with an excess of positive turn toward the broom requires less ice than someone with a slow, easy turn who may turn the rock inside.

2) *Analyzing the opponent* — good skips must possess the ability to analyze and determine opponent delivery weaknesses. These must be exploited in whatever way possible. During the early ends, imperfections are detected through each player's observation of the opposing players as they deliver.

- a) Analyzing the delivery — what type of imperfection are you looking for? Determine if the opposing players commit any of the common delivery faults, and if so, try to take advantage of that thrower. Some of the more common faults are as follows:

- i) Incorrect line-up on the imaginary line, usually results in the thrower releasing inside-out or outside-in.
- ii) Body and sliding foot not behind the stone. This problem is common and makes it very difficult for the thrower to accurately hit the broom.
- iii) Drifting off line. The common cause of drift is poor backswing timing which means the thrower is off balance during the delivery, making it difficult to hit the broom consistently. If the drift is to the right (right-handed thrower) it will usually affect the in-turn considerably because of the forced hook-back.
- iv) No follow-through. This is usually caused by a balance problem resulting in a quick motion at release. The common tendency is to jab the rock wide.
- v) Inconsistent release. Many curlers consistently turn the stone slightly in, or flip it out. If the ice has a swingy turn, try to force the thrower to play on the swingy side if they turn the rock in. On ice with runs, force the player with a tendency of flipping, to play the falling turn.

- b) Know the style of game your opponent plays. Once the opponent's style of play has been determined, it becomes possible to counter-act. For example:

- i) Does the enemy like to play wide open? If so, use a few more guards; so the opponent will likely attempt to remove them.
- ii) Does the enemy favor come-around? Then play to the rings and force a wide open game.
- iii) Does the enemy prefer one turn hits? Or inside-out vs. outside-in? Many competitive teams use this routine, and forcing them away from their norm increases the chance of their error.

- iv) Are your opponents proficient sweepers? Awareness of the opposing team's sweeping ability helps to diagnose the preferred shot at a particular time. How? Always expect a strong sweeping team to prefer a draw over a takeout in a critical situation. Teams with weaker sweeping have less chance of successfully completing crucial draws. So force them to play that type of shot.
- v) Do the opposing skip and players concentrate on the game? For the opposing team to sweep critical draws effectively and play delicate shots such as come-arounds, the players must all be aware of everything going on around them. If the opposing skip has a lackadaisical attitude, and the early ends have passed, trying delicate shots might be advisable. If your foes aren't attentive, they may not be certain how to follow.

### *E. Team Compatibility and Effectiveness*

Although players on a successful team need not be the best of friends, it is important for personalities to be compatible during competition. Many teams with potential are destroyed by personality clashes. Team compatibility is summed up as follows:

- 1) All team members must have absolute respect for the skip's ability and judgment. The skip must have respect and regard for his teammates. A skip without confidence will never succeed.
- 2) The vice-skip must have rapport with both skip and front-enders. As he is in communication with all players during the game, the vice-skip must be able to instill confidence in others. The vice-skip must believe 100 per cent in the skip and never interfere except when requested to do so.
- 3) The front end must function as a unit with each player having the utmost respect for the other. When sweeping, the inside sweeper is the leader and it is he who sets the rhythm and has the responsibility of judging the stone's weight.
- 4) Worthy skips must have high regard and confidence in all members of the team. Praise for individual sweeping and throwing accomplishments throughout the game provides the players with a feeling of need and accomplishment. Negative criticism of an individual's performance, in a tactful constructive manner, must be saved for the game's post mortem.

## IV. Strategy

### A. Draw vs. Takeout

A game of curling is basically played in one of two ways: Draw or takeout. During the course of a game the type of play (draw or takeout) might change many times. Some of the basic factors influencing change are:

- 1) How much of the game has passed.
- 2) The score.
- 3) Who has the last stone.

Playing the draw game might be considered the offensive tactic, while takeout is the defensive approach. Good skips are able to switch from draw to takeout at exactly the right time to ensure success.

### B. Takeout Game

Takeout game refers to the defensive style of play when you attempt to remove any stone the opponent places in the circles. Sometimes rocks placed in front of the circles are also removed to avoid allowing the opponent any means of scoring more than one point. Takeout, however, doesn't mean a draw is never attempted. Difficult shots requiring delicate weight adjustments are not attempted. Takeout is a safe, unrisky style of play which shouldn't require unnecessary chances to be taken. The takeout game is used in the following situations:

- 1) In the early ends with and without last stone. Why? Neither team is certain of ice conditions, so touchy shots are risky to attempt.
- 2) Always when the opposing team has last stone unless you are down several points, or have reached a point in the game where the score is close and a steal is essential.

Why? With last stone a team is in the best position to score because it will have the last say in the end. For this reason, the team without last stone shouldn't take unnecessary chances, which means playing the takeout game.

- 3) Anytime during the game when you are up two or more.

Why? In curling, a two-point margin can be enough spread for victory. There is virtually no need to score additional points; only make certain the opponent can't score. This is best accomplished with the takeout game.

*Examples:* The following situations assume ice conditions and players' abilities average.

*Figure 1:* It is the second end and you are throwing white stones with last rock. You are shot, the opponent second shot and your vice-skip is throwing. DO YOU REMOVE SECOND SHOT OR DRAW FOR SECOND?

When playing a takeout game, remove the second shot.

Why? Any rock in the circles is a potential counter, so the safest approach is to remove it.

*Figure 2:* The game has progressed to the fifth end and you are throwing white stones without last rock, the score is tied. It is the second's shot.

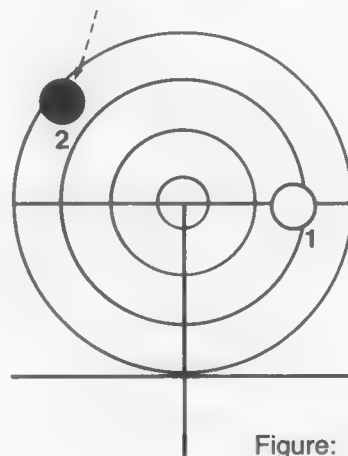


Figure: 1



## DO YOU GUARD THE SHOT STONE OR DRAW THE OPPOSITE SIDE?

You should be playing takeout, which means draw the other side.

Why? Guarding the shot stone would usually indicate an attempt to steal. It is still early in the game, the opponent has last stone and the score is close. So ideally, you would like to force the opponent into the situation of taking one point, or giving up two or more. This is the safe approach.

*Figure 3:* It is end number six and you are up two, throwing white stones without last rock. The second is to throw.

## DO YOU DRAW TO THE CIRCLES BEHIND THE GUARD, OR REMOVE THE GUARD?

Takeout should be followed which means remove the guard.

Why? When the opposing team has last stone, it is quite easy for it to use a corner guard to score more than one point.

If the strategy does not work out, the opponent would still have the opportunity of drawing to the four-foot for one. Drawing the opposite side is a risky alternative. The safest approach is the takeout game which means removal of the guard. The turn and weight chosen depends upon the conditions and throwers' competence.

Two evenly matched teams playing takeout for an entire game would, in all probability, have a low scoring, close game. So, it usually isn't possible to play in this manner unless you are fortunate enough to establish an early lead, and by successfully playing takeout to maintain it.

### C. Draw Game

The draw game, an offensive style of play, might be attempted in one of the following situations when points are needed:

- 1) The score is close, the early ends have passed and you have last stone.

Why? Since the score is close, both teams, in all probability, have been playing takeout to this point. For a team to establish the edge for victory it is necessary to score more than one point at a time somewhere along the way. Last-rock advantage after the early ends is the best time to get a little risky in an attempt to score more than one point.

- 2) The early ends have passed, you are down one or two points and have last stone.

Why? Even being down two at this time does not constitute a desperate situation. So, with this in mind, the approach would be much the same as in (1). At this point, there really isn't yet a need to play the draw game without last stone.

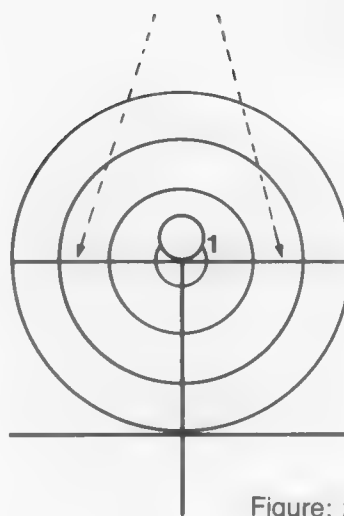


Figure: 2

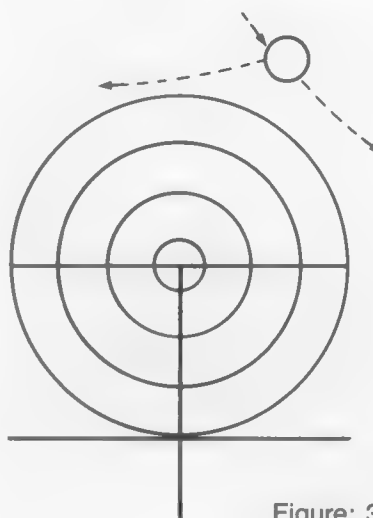


Figure: 3

3) You are down more than two points at any time and don't have last stone.

Why? Being down three, four or more is the situation requiring a gamble at all times. This is when the draw game is attempted with last stone and without.

By using the draw game at any time, it is possible to score points required to get back into the game or establish a slight advantage.

What is really meant by the DRAW GAME? Is a takeout never thrown?

The draw game is played by attempting one or more delicate shots such as the come-around, freeze, etc. which are calculated to put a team in a position to score more than one in an end when they have last stone, or possibly steal a point when the opposition has last-rock advantage.

#### Examples

*Figure 4:* Play is in the fifth end. You are throwing white stones and possess last rock. The score is tied 3-3 and you have a rock four feet in front and to the right of centre. What should you call for your second's first or second rock? The stone out front, commonly referred to as a corner guard is the break you have been waiting for. A successful come-around shot should provide the opportunity of counting more than one. The perfect shot would see the rock stop behind the guard and in front of the T-line. With the stone in this position, the opponent now has a difficult task. If the opponent misses, draw the opposite side without setting up the chance for a double takeout by your opponent and you will have the opportunity to score two.

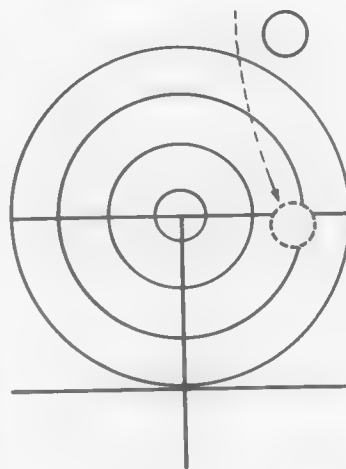


Figure: 4

*Figure 5:* Playing in the sixth end you have last stone but are down one. The opponent has one stone in the circles behind the T-line and you are throwing white stones. It is your third's first shot. What should you do? You need to score points, and with last rock playing the sixth end, it is time to make a move. The rock belonging to the opponent could be helpful in this situation. So call for a draw to the face of the enemy stone. If the shot is executed correctly, or even close, the opportunity will exist to count more than one. How? Since the opponent doesn't have last rock, he must attempt to remove your rock even if it isn't shot. If the takeout is not played correctly, the opponent will drive your stone onto his own and provide you with an opportunity to be sitting two.

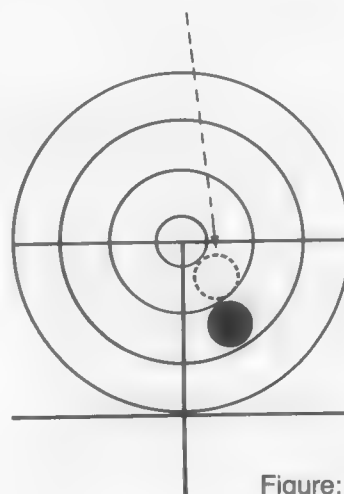


Figure: 5

*Figure 6:* You are down four playing the fifth end without last stone. The opponent is throwing black stones with one out in front on

the centre line. It is your third's first shot. What should you do? Draw around the guard and hopefully position the stone behind the guard in the four-foot, in front of the T-line. If the rock stops in the four-foot behind the guard, a subsequent error by the opponent will provide you the opportunity for a steal.

The three situations discussed are examples of the draw game. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the need to score with last stone. In both cases, a delicate draw shot executed correctly will provide an opportunity to score more than one. Very little gamble is taken because the four-foot remains open which means the skip can draw with the final shot to score the end if necessary. Figure 6 is an example of a gamble situation. Anytime you are down four, gambling is essential.

The draw game is risky to a degree, because there is a possibility of the plan backfiring with the opponent coming out ahead.

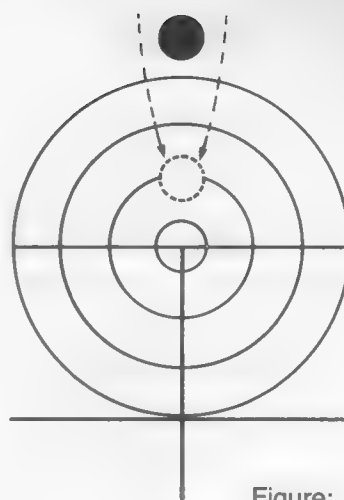


Figure: 6

#### *D. Takeout vs. Draw*

It is difficult to compare takeout and draw since the styles of play have separate and very definite purposes in curling. However, for the most part, takeout should be used rather than draw for the following reasons:

- 1) A takeout is the easiest shot in curling. It is the only shot in curling that actually has four variables. It is possible to be wide and light, heavy and narrow, and still find partial success with the shot. In brief, the shot does not have to be exact.
- 2) The slide delivery, when perfected, allows most curlers to throw fairly close to the skip's broom. People who have become proficient sliders usually deliver close to the target which means, at the worst, they hit the opponent's stone and roll out.
- 3) Luck is very seldom a factor when playing the takeout game. The shot is usually made or missed and there is little opportunity for a lucky rub or ricochet.

There are factors involved with the draw game which makes it more difficult and quite often extremely risky.

- 1) Difficulty in reading ice — attempting shots such as come-arounds and freezes are only successful when the skip places the broom in exactly the right position. Neither skip nor thrower can be very far wrong.
- 2) Debris on the ice — a small amount of debris will have an adverse effect on a slow-moving draw, while a fast-moving takeout will push it aside.
- 3) Rocks not equally sharp — if two curling stones are said to be matched, the texture of their running edges should be equal. However, this is not always so, and perfectly matched stones do have a slight variation in running edge texture which means both stones will not draw the same amount. The imperfections make delicate draw shots tricky.

- 4) Side and centre ice difficulties — anyone with considerable curling experience is aware of centre and side ice variations as the game progresses. This ice variation usually exists because more stones travel down the middle, breaking down the pebble and making the ice keener. Side to centre ice variation makes it extremely difficult to determine proper draw weight when playing outside in or inside out.

### *E. How To Play the Takeout Game*

The takeout game is played simply and completely open, if possible. Many skips complicate the takeout game by using far too many takeout weights and asking players to throw a weight they don't throw comfortably. The best teams in curling only choose from four different weights, while the average rink can get by nicely with two or three takeout weights.

Every skip must devise a simple signal system to indicate which weight is to be thrown and make certain every player understands how much weight is required for various takeouts.

*Example:* Weight just through the rings — tap the stone to indicate removal, then touch the ice with the broom just behind the back line (Figure 7).

Weight to the backboard — tap the stone to indicate removal, and point the broom toward the backboard which indicates where the stone should stop after it is removed (Figure 8).

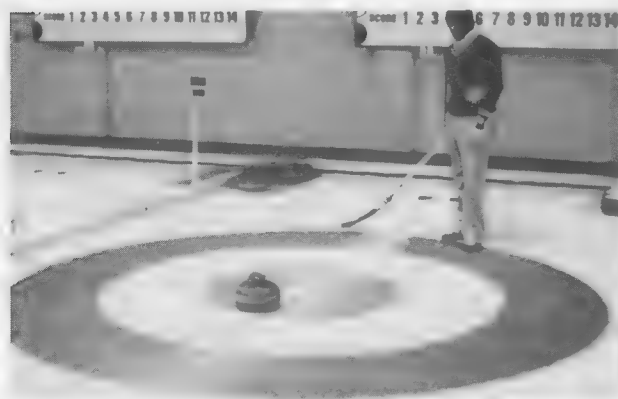


Figure: 7



Figure: 8

Normal weight — this will vary from team to team and should be the average takeout weight a team throws comfortably. This weight can be indicated by tapping the stone which indicates removal and simply placing the broom down as a target. Under no circumstances is hard running weight considered to be "normal". (Figure 9).



Figure: 9



When and where possible, the skip should ask each player to throw a takeout weight that player delivers with the greatest accuracy. A player shouldn't be asked to throw a weight which makes him feel uncomfortable unless the situation demands it.

The amount of takeout played is dependent upon

- 1) How far the game has progressed. During the early ends (ends 3 or 4) the style of play should be completely takeout providing your team has not fallen behind by three or more points. Many skips make the mistake of becoming involved in the "draw game" too early at a time when they don't know the ice and the players are uncertain of the weight.
- 2) The score. When you are up two or more points at any time during the game, it is advisable to play takeout. Once the early ends have passed and the score is close, the draw game might be used when you have last-rock advantage, and takeout should be the style if you have last rock against you.

### *F. When Should the Draw Game be Played?*

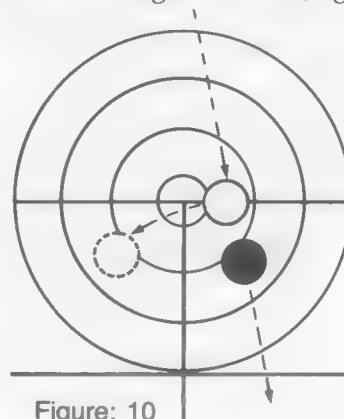
The draw game is the offensive approach to curling. The draw game is extremely difficult, also risky and should only be practised when it is necessary to score points you are behind, or the score is close when the game is into the latter ends. Many skips make the error of playing the draw game too early which often results in disaster. Why? In the early ends neither skip nor player has acquired the feel of the ice conditions sufficiently to attempt delicate draws. Playing the draw game too early often results in the opponent counting two or more. It has been known to happen too, that a less-skilled team will inadvertently gamble early and be, again inadvertently, successful against a better team. Many skips make the mistake of attempting to count every end. The likelihood of success in this endeavor is slim. To steal each and every time the opponent has last stone is a gamble. The opponent deserves to count one when he has last stone. Never begrudge him one. Your job is to score more than one when you have last stone.

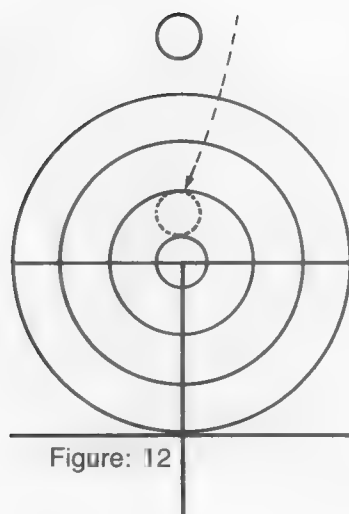
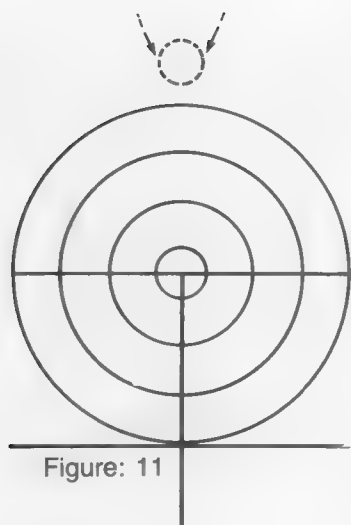
The draw game should be played in the latter ends when there is a need to score points. The pebble has worn, both skips and players know the ice and the chances of the draw game working effectively have improved.

### *G. How to Play the Draw Game*

1) With last stone — the common approach is the use of corner guards as discussed in (C) (See Figure 4). Enemy rocks behind the T-line provide excellent backing for freezes. If a freeze attempt is successful, the opponent trying to remove the frozen stone may drive it back on to his own, killing his own and leaving you the opportunity of drawing for two. (Figure 10).

2) Without last stone — this is a gamble and a skip must be aware of it before becoming involved. The common ploy in attempting the "steal" is to have the lead player throw the first stone in front of the rings toward the centre line (Figure 11). Should the opposition play or produce the wrong shot, or miss, there will be cover to draw behind, hopefully to the four-foot circle setting up the opportunity for a "steal" of at least one. (Figure 12).





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